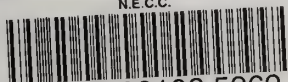


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PARNASSUS

SPRING 2004

PARNASSUS SPRING 2004

Inter-Arts Magazine
of Northern Essex Community College

Parnassus is the name of the
mythological mountain home of
the nine muses who inspired
humankind in the arts.

The policy of the editorial staff has been to select material for the magazine democratically.
We have read each work submitted and viewed all artwork.
We voted to determine eligibility: a majority vote for a piece meant publication.
Parnassus provides an opportunity for new artists and writers to reach others;
it's a showcase of Northern Essex Community College student creativity.

PARNASSUS PROFILE

Cover photographer Hannah R. Creed is a journalism major who had planned on studying creative writing, but she underwent an epiphany (her "ah-ha!" moment, as she puts it) in her Introduction to Photography class, and now plans to study photography when she transfers to Fitchburg State this fall. The cover exemplifies her recent exploration of portrait photography. "I try to capture what people love best," she says, and describes how she tried to reveal her friend's interest in Japanese history and culture by having her wear a kimono, fashioning her hair and make up, and adding the fan to reflect this theme. Hannah loves the surrealist photography of Jerry Uelsmann, but says that her greatest inspiration is her mentor, Ben Donaldson, a freelance photographer in New York. She has recently been hired to do photos for a web site on medieval armor, and hopes to have a show in Newburyport soon.





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Waiting out another whirling winter,
stuck in yet another
square building.
Homes rearrange themselves
like checkers, leaping and
jumping, trying to fool one another.
The thermometer checks itself
as you check with it too,
the mercury teasing a few more degrees.
Spring is as distant as the faint simmering
glimmer of sun.

The fattest confused bear is waddling
through the trees, back to his nap,
layers of winter warmth yet to be
slept off. His alarm clock must've
been set wrong.
Well, he can wait. As must we all.

The greatest thing is not having a mind,
a comfortable re-set, an off-switch
allowing the season to pass easily.
Thickly congealing, synapses slower and slow,
until they stop altogether,
reaching out their spidery, nerve-like fingers
desperately for each other,
frozen in a portrait of their last
long effort.

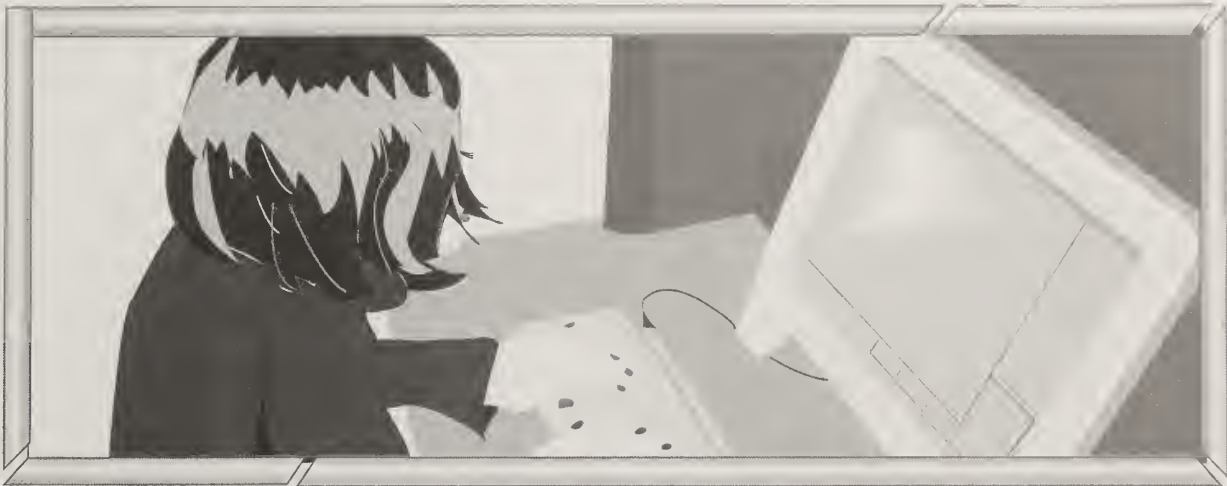
by Emily Dignan



MANTRA FOR END-USERS

by Donald Ian Poor

I have a stupid computer at my job --
It's designed to do stupid work.
Stupid stupid stupid computer.
It squats there smugly on my desk --
A rectangular Buddha on the corporate altar.
Its body is a spawning ground of drawers and slots,
buttons and receptacles,
Its head stares at me stupidly, a window to a world
more stupid than my own
Peppered all about it, like tiny blinking warts,
Are an unholy number of colored lights
that mock and taunt me;
Its pale hue is the sickly putty-gray of an
unbleached skeleton --
The monitor's screen is a baleful liquid black:
The face of a Roswell alien in extreme closeup.
Its skin is dry and slightly rough, like a lizard
or a toad
Or the handshake of a used-car salesman.
Keys (like their operator)
are sluggish, dark and overworn.
Scars and tattoos from years of combat.
It chitters constantly, stupid little rodent
ripping flatulence in my face --
While the keyboard hacks and clacks away
like an unoiled saxophone.
It reeks of nicotine and dust, of stale coffee and
burning plastic --
And the remnants of a thousand
hastily-eaten lunches.
Stupid
Stupid
Stupid computer.



CITY POEM

by Jess Lane

behold the city sadness. the always sirens always screeching hissing clanking
flashing madness. the always cement metal tall tall brick and mortar hardness.
always floodlit always shadows. always homeless. (see a bum collecting bottles.
think about giving him mine. light is green we go he stays.) the gate's walls always
lock up lock out lock in. a place where someone will stop and talk to you on the
street and you never trust their intent and maybe you shouldn't. A place where
people outnumber trees and the most contact you make is brushing shoulders on the
t. the more crammed you get the more distant you become.

The Greenman *Paul Wilson*





Jeffery Trick



Elissa Brown
2005

SEASON --- OF A ---

Anger furies
Rage explodes
Temper heightens
Emotion corrupts
Time stills
Lust burns
Passion dies
Feelings change
Time rearranged
Empty vessel
Loneliness remains
Lies destroy

Time twists
Deceptions misconceive
Fate lies
Eyes wide
Souls saddened
Pain remains
Tears sting
Salt purifies
Broken hearted

Courage begins
Serenity accepts
Wisdom defers
Love exceeds
Forgiveness frees

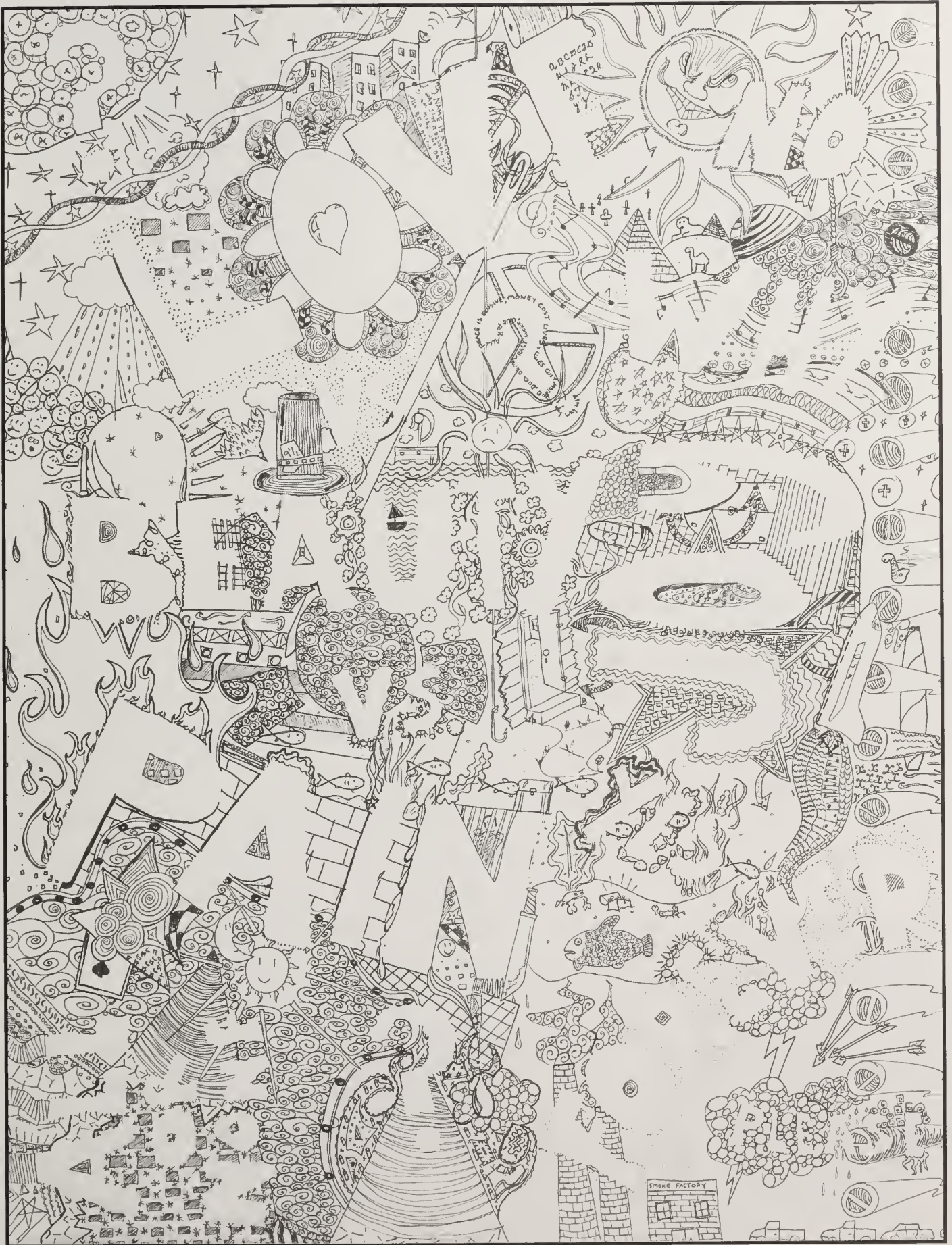
TORMENTED --- PAST ---

by Tania Antoinette Gonzalez

Your ocean surrounds,
 blankets me in its depths.
My splayed body
 stripped
 bare.
I see anew, with widened eyes.
Stolen heart, no longer frantically
 pumping black ichor through
 these twisted veins.
I drown slowly in the emotion of you.
Struggling against the currents
 of remembered
 fear,
 changing to bliss
 and
 heightened passions.
My heart stills in awe of you,
 overwhelmed
 by the passion
 in your performance.
Drowned forever in the emotion of you.
The casual flow
 of your life
 into mine,
cleanses the blackness from my soul.
Now, I'm only fearing you,
 captivated
 by your playful smile.
The callused caress of your touch,
Drowns me completely in the emotion of you.

THE
EMOTION
OF
YOU

by Jillian Harlow



Characters

Renny – Recently recalled C.I.A. agent
from Afghanistan

Elizabeth – Renny's ex-wife

Jennifer – Their daughter

Time: Present

Place: America

FALLING HOME

Screenplay by: Rob Carlson.

Amy Betts. and Melissa Fortna

Renny was recalled after years in Afghanistan due to a break down that pushed him towards drinking heavily. Before leaving for Afghanistan years ago he went through a divorce with his wife Elizabeth, who now lives alone with their daughter Jennifer.

(This starts with Renny being very drunk and punching through a window to break into his old house. He unlocks the door, stumbles into the kitchen and then falls to the floor. His ex-wife, Elizabeth, is awakened by the sound of shattering glass.)

Elizabeth: Jennifer? Is that you? Are you okay?

(No answer from Jennifer's room as the loud noises continue from downstairs. Elizabeth slowly rises from her bed and walks towards the doorway. Quietly she pushes open the door to Jennifer's room and finds her sleeping soundly. She closes the door and stands at the top of the stairway staring down into the darkness below.)

Elizabeth: (calling downstairs) Hello? Who's there?

Renny: Elizabeth? It was horrible. (shouts) Elizabeth?! I need help, my hands are stained with so much blood!

Elizabeth: (goes downstairs) Renny is that you? Oh my God, you're bleeding.

Renny: (shouting and pulling himself to his feet, his speech slurred) I was an assassin over there! I was a killer! My job... that I left all of this for (gestures awkwardly around). How are you?

Elizabeth: (voice wavering with shock) What the hell has happened? Why are you here? And stop shouting, you'll wake Jennifer.

Renny: I love you Elizabeth, I was wrong, about everything

(Renny lurches forward towards Elizabeth; she screams.)

Elizabeth: Get away, you're ruined, you can't be here.

(Jennifer walks into the kitchen.)

Jennifer: What is going on? (panic rising in her voice) Get away from her! You left.

(Renny pulls away from Elizabeth, gesturing towards his daughter.)

Renny: Jenny? What, no hello for your Daddy?

Jennifer: You're not my Daddy now. You left long ago and lost that privilege.

(Renny stumbles back against the kitchen counter as if to hold himself up from falling.)

Renny: That hurts', Jen.

Jennifer: (tears forming in her eyes) Well, how do you think I feel? You left me! You didn't even say good-bye. You don't think that hurt me? (a laugh bitterly escapes her mouth) And why would you think that? It has always been about you, hasn't it?

(Jennifer looks her father square in the face, staring into his bloodshot eyes, never wavering from her cold expression.)

Jennifer: Get out of our house. I don't want you here and neither does Mom.

Renny: You don't mean that. (then addressing Elizabeth) Baby, she doesn't mean that.

Elizabeth: You heard her, Renny.

Renny: I can't believe this. I can't FUCKING BELIEVE THIS!

(In a fit of rage, Renny throws a crystal vase from the table and onto the floor smashing it into pieces.)

Elizabeth: (quietly) Jennifer, go upstairs and lock your door.

Jennifer: But Mom-

Elizabeth: (interrupting) Jennifer, now, and find the cat so it doesn't walk over all this glass.

(Jennifer goes back upstairs)

Renny: Don't worry Jenny, I won't leave without saying good-bye.

Elizabeth: Just stop. Leave right now Renny, or I'm calling the police.

Renny: Elizabeth... please, you don't understand. They called me back. I broke a sergeant's nose in an Afghan bar...everything erupted. I have nowhere -

Elizabeth: (cutting off Renny's sentence) Looks to me like you do have somewhere, and it's in a bottle.

(Elizabeth picks up the phone and dials the operator.)

Elizabeth: Hello operator? I need the police please.

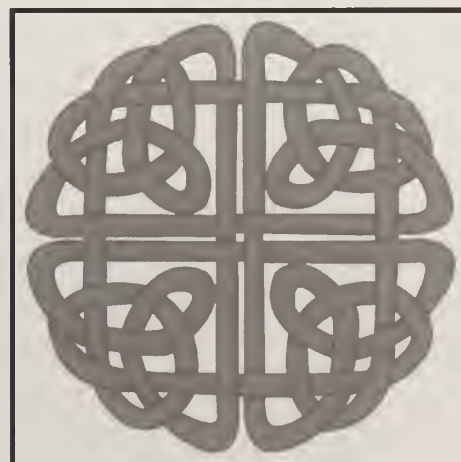
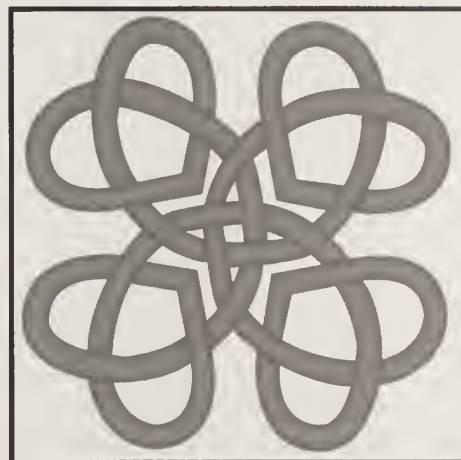
(Renny sways and stumbles, then falls to floor.)

Renny: Elizabeth, look at me.

(Elizabeth ignores her husband as he continues speaking in a slurred drone.)

Elizabeth: Hello, yes, I have an intruder in my home.

Kathy Crossman



Renny: Did you know we were ordered to get information by any means necessary?

Elizabeth: No, I do not believe I am in immediate danger.

Renny: We tortured prisoners, gave them drugs and broke their bones.

Elizabeth: It's my ex-husband.

Renny: Kept them awake with a light in their face, in a box room so they couldn't stand or sit right.

Elizabeth: Yes, quickly please.

Renny: I lost my armor babe; I couldn't keep the feelings down.

(Elizabeth hangs up the phone and turns to look at her husband.)

Elizabeth: The police are coming to pick you up.

Renny: (speaks almost inaudibly now) Trying to protect this country, to protect you and Jenny...

(Elizabeth gets a towel from a drawer and throws it towards Renny.)

Elizabeth: Wrap your hand in that, so you don't bleed all over the cruiser like you have in the kitchen.

Renny: (ignoring the towel)...but no one to protect me, supposed to bury it all, every death and at the same time...forget about you, in order to protect...

Elizabeth: Yes you certainly forgot about us. How long did you wait, how much did you have to drink in order to remember? Why am I even talking to you?

Renny: I...

Elizabeth: Shut up and lay there in your mess of blood and glass.

Renny: didn't forget...I love. ..

Elizabeth: I said shut the fuck up, you ruined bastard!

(Renny passes out just as flashing lights pulse through the windows, illuminating the scene with red and blue.)

Elizabeth: I love you too, Renny.



A solitary figure paced the sidewalk. Normally, one wouldn't stop and wonder why or what is going on inside a person's head. But he comes here every day, just to pace and smoke a cigarette. There must be a reason.

He looks sad.

Of course if I asked him, "What's wrong?" he'd probably shrug and say, "Nothing," considering I don't know him. I mean, it's his business. So why do I feel compelled to ask? Why do I even care? It's just that I see him so much and he always looks so sad.

Sad and depressed.

Like he's waiting for someone to come up to him and ask him what his problem is. Why don't I? It's just a simple question? What's wrong? That's all I have to say. Just two words. I can do this.

Crap! He's walking away. I can't just call after him now. I don't even know his name. Do I just say "Hey you!" He might look at me like I'm crazy or something. I can always ask tomorrow. I know he'll be here. He's here every day. What's the big deal?

Sorrowful.

I wonder what his problem is, though? Maybe there isn't one after all. But if there was one that I could have helped with if I just asked him those two simple words, then...Oh, what am I saying. I'm worrying for nothing. He doesn't care for those words. He just enjoys a nice quiet smoke. He doesn't need me bothering him. He probably loves the peace and quiet of being alone.

Though, he doesn't look like he does. I wouldn't either.

Dismal.

TWO SIMPLE WORDS

by Andrew Johnson

Should I follow him to make sure he doesn't do anything stupid? Then he would think I am really weird and he'd probably kick the crap outta me. I know I'm jumping to conclusions, but what if he slits his wrists tonight and I could have stopped it if I just said those two simple words? Maybe he just needs a friend. He looks like he could be a cool guy, but I have no way of knowing just by looking at him.

On the other hand, maybe I don't want to know what his problem is. If I go and ask him what's wrong and he goes into huge details of how much his life sucks, then that would be very awkward because I wouldn't know what to say. I could say "Man, that sucks," but that doesn't really help much. I wouldn't know how to relate to that because my life is really good, you know.

Spiritless.

Hey, he's not walking away after all! I still have a chance of making a new friend. Though, asking what's wrong isn't going to make him my friend. Making a new friend takes longer than that. And, you know, maybe he's one of those people whom you have to say the right words to. But he looks really depressed.

Almost hopeless.

Do I have the right words to cheer him up? Heck, I bet there is nothing really wrong. He comes here every night looking sad and depressed. It's like his ritual, like his thing that gives him pleasure. I guess some people enjoy being miserable. Oh, what the hey. There's always tomorrow.

Extremely downcast.

What's he doing now?

What's that in his hand? Is that a...NO!!!



U STUPID

by Michael Zuccola

If you're afraid,
Then back out now.

Don't riddle me with riddles,
Because I'm cool regardless,
You'll see...cripple.

Spill your pitch some other time,
For I wince at the thought of it.
Fly on the wall, fly off of them all...
Twitch!

Leader?

Follower?

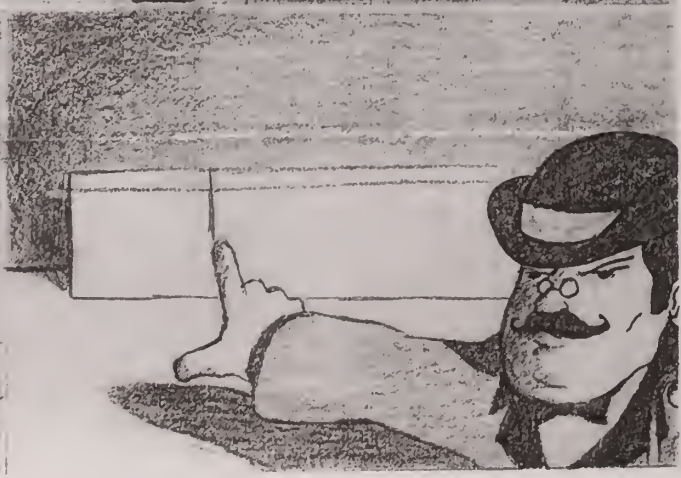
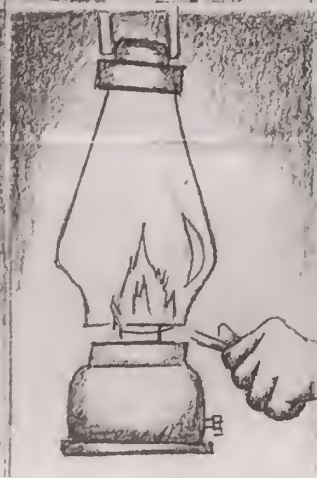
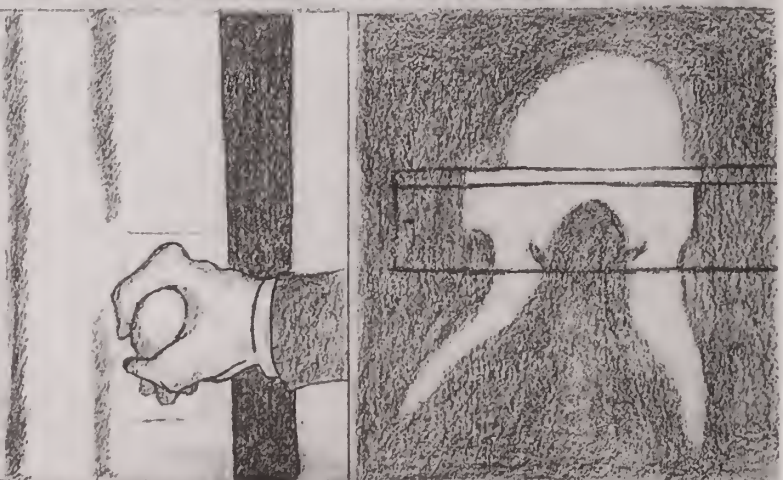
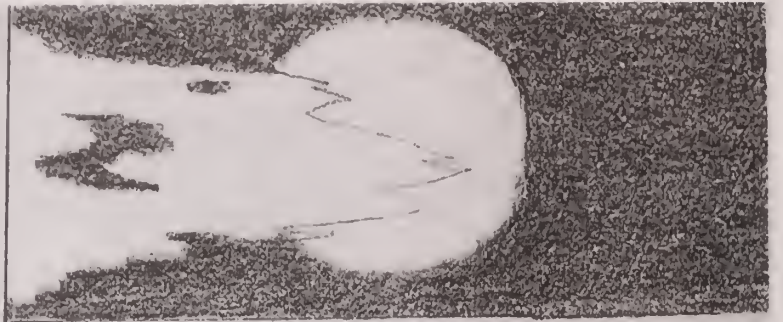
You're a fake and you know it.

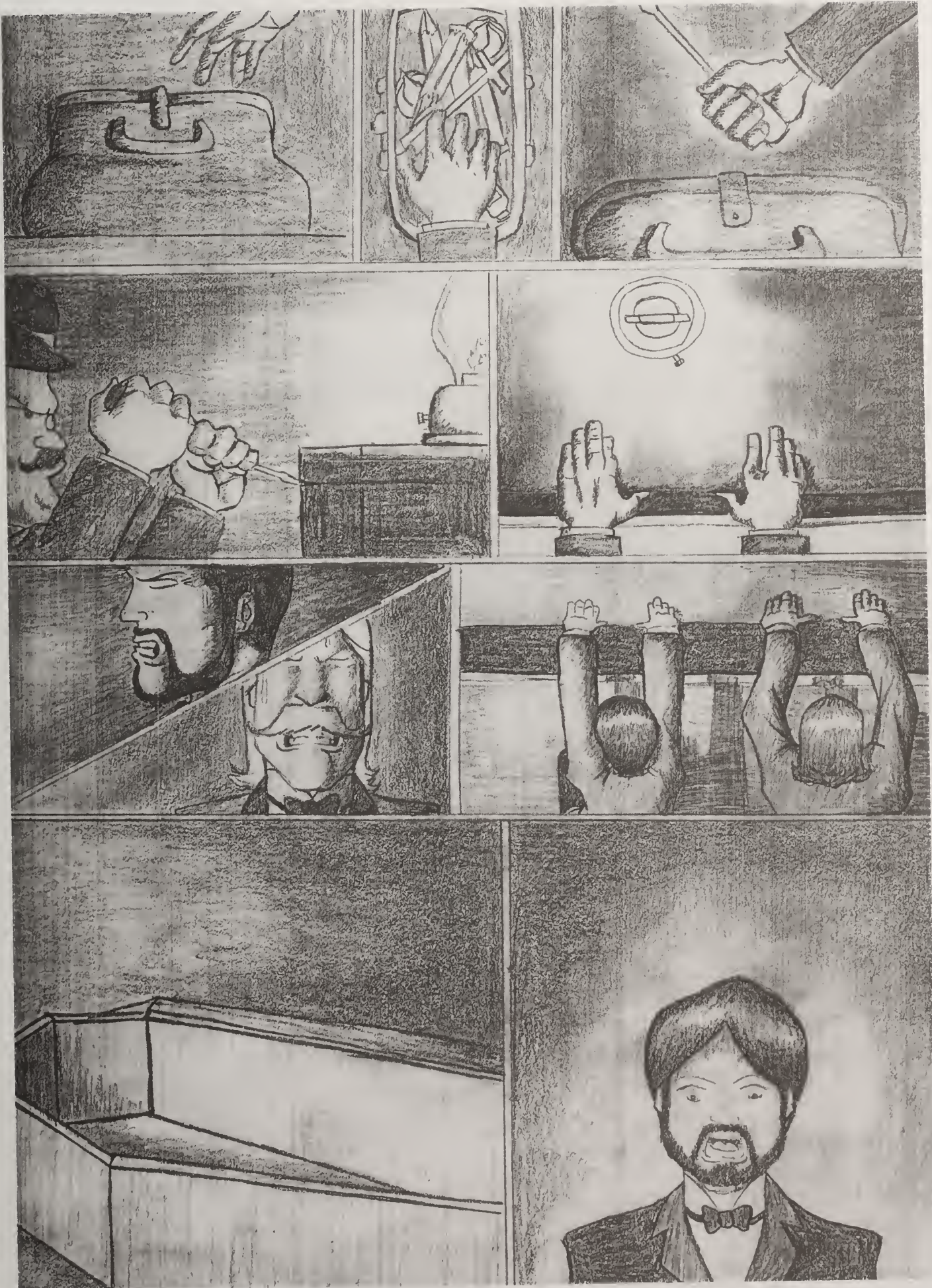
Don't open your mouth...I swear to God.

The color red,
We're brothers alike.

For you can't be too careful,
But I'm cool regardless,
You'll see...stupid.

Find yourself someone who cares.





December 31, 2024:

"Come on, come on. Where the hell are you," Richard Reinhart mumbled, through chattering teeth. His suit coat offered nothing against the New York cold. With a frozen, runny nose he searched the endless faces in Times Square. And though his earlobes felt like somebody had just taken a hammer to them, the threat of frostbite was only his second concern. While panting warm, desperate breaths into his freezing hands, the CIA agent located his target.

John Adams was just twenty feet away, surrounded by a New Year's Eve mix of celebrants, reporters and camera crews. With his lips, fingernails and satin robe -all of which were black -and with his ghostly white complexion, he was easy to spot in the nighttime crowd.

As the dressed-for-winter partiers began cheering down the last ten seconds to midnight, Reinhart realized he was too late to prevent the next holocaust. He caught the demented euphoria growing on Adams' face, and the way he raised his arms to the heavens.

The resulting upsurge of winds howled and growled like the devil's hellhound. It sucked the optimistic hopes of a better year right out of the hearts of the now hushed and wary. The New Year's Eve ball dropped in human silence.

Everyone held their breath, waiting, certain that 2025 was about to start off with a big, bad bang. And, they were right. From newspaper stands to skyscrapers, every man-made structure within a three mile radius blew apart easier than a house of cards. Under a full moon, the atmosphere transformed into a rabid weather beast, a killing machine with shards of glass for teeth, falling brick for claws, and a tail of plummeting steel girders.

Horrendous screams rode the winds -human screams. Frightened men and women raced frantically in pursuit of shelter that no longer existed. The elderly and infirm were knocked down and trampled in the mad rush. A lucky few, though, found safety by scurrying under the broken bodies of the already dead.

An army of tornadoes mysteriously touched down out of a clear, starry sky. They began snatching up even the stoutest of men, hurling them without effort into the darkness; it caused whole families and perfect strangers to cling to one another to stay weighted to the ground.

POINT OF DARKNESS – POINT OF LIGHT

by Avery Elzmyth

From skin-piercing sand particles to metal doors spinning like saw blades, the flying debris attacked Reinhart from every direction. His entire body felt like it was being riddled with bullets as he trudged on, dodging and blocking the refuse as best he could. More pissed than pained, he promised himself he would get to Adams this time. "If I'm going down," he yelled, "then you're going down with me, you son-of-a-bitch!"

He could hear Adams laughing at them -them, the insignificant mortals -as he stood victorious in the small eye of the storm he'd created for himself.

Metal and stone pounded at Reinhart: flying cinder blocks, hubcaps, Coke cans... It was enough to render him unconscious: refrigerators, mannequins -or were they corpses? But, he couldn't let it happen. He was CIA. He had to go on~ He had to ignore the broken glass slashing at his flesh, his face, leaving him blood-soaked and physically beyond repair. The agent believed he had finally figured out a way to stop Adams, so if he died there and then...if he failed...it would mean the end of the world -literally. He was not about to let that happen.

Even with his arms protecting his head Reinhart was nearly blinded by the fallout, and by that accursed arctic blast. It had become unbearably constant, so much so that he feared freezing solid right in mid-step. Suffering massive blood loss, exhausted, it was just too much. Adams was so close, yet he might as well have been an ocean away. The agent's mind began betraying him with whispers of giving up. Of laying down to rest. It told him that he had given all he had and it was okay to die now. Not

completely blinded, through his water-flooded eyes the seriously wounded agent could still see Adams. He was just five feet away, insanely rejoicing, reveling in the hell on earth he'd cast the New Yorkers into.

It hit Reinhart that they were all his family, these tortured humans. Every skinny, fat, righteous or ignorant slob was his brother. Every beautiful, ugly, motherly or wicked woman became his sister. Being this close to death, being this damn close to extinction, it gave him a sense of oneness with his fellow man.

He could not fail his people. He refused to. Their anguished cries bit at his ears and sickened his soul. It filled him with the mettle and inner fire to fight on. To fight to his death if need be. Thrusting a shoulder to the arctic blast, even as it continued to launch its arsenal of death at him - tables, tires and roof tiles - he forged onward, if only an inch at a time.

Three feet away and face-to-face: He was taller than Adams, and had a good sixty pounds of muscle on him. Yet the man who seemed to have dominion over the forces of nature disregarded him as though he were less than a mosquito. Reinhart hoped to god that Adams would keep right on disregarding him; he figured it was the only way he could get close enough to do what he had to do.

As the agent prepared to lunge at his adversary, a brick fell out of the sky and nearly drove his skull into his neck. It dropped him to his knees as darkness ate at his consciousness.

(continued on next page)

Mark Lord



"No, damn it," he rasped, his voice lost within the explosions of broken buildings colliding with the earth. He knew there'd be plenty of time to die after it was over. He couldn't give up, not when Adams was finally within his reach. Shutting off the pain as best he could, he grabbed the .45 under his suit coat. For balance, while laboring hard to get to his feet, he wrapped an arm about Adams' waist and held on tight. He rammed the weapon into the smaller man's gut, and with five fast claps of thunder he emptied the clip into his enemy, through his enemy, and inadvertently through his own arm. The agent shrieked, but he couldn't let go of the one who would destroy the world. He *wouldn't* let go.

And Adams *still* disregarded him. He felt no pain from the bullets, only the sadistic ecstasy he derived from the wails and groans of dying humans.

Even though Reinhart's skull felt like it was caved in, and even though mere bone splinters were holding his forearm together, he believed he had Adams right where he wanted him. Hoping that reverse psychology would work here, the agent demanded, "Don't heal yourself this time! Just die, you freak! Just die!"

John Adams had a special way of healing when his skin was torn away, when bullets and bombs exposed his dark, organ-less insides. Reinhart had seen him wounded with each of his assaults on mankind -Paris, Hong Kong, Moscow- and observed how he had healed.

Leaning on Adams, Reinhart didn't feel cold anymore, didn't feel anything anymore. Death was upon him; he knew it. And he knew that his last thought would be that he had failed. In the act of closing his eyes for the very last time, he caught what he wanted to see in Adams' face -or rather, through his face. The agent fought to cling to life for one more precious minute.

Adam's maniacal grin turned to fear. He had started his healing process, which meant he began to separate his molecules. He could break them completely down and then rearrange them to erase his wounds.

"Get off me!" he shrieked, finally acknowledging the agent. He kicked and pushed, but he had no strength while his atoms were disconnected.

The agent didn't have much strength left either, but whatever he had, he used twice that to keep his wholly unnatural adversary trapped in a bear hug. When Adams reached a state of transparency

simulating a fuzzy, holographic image, Reinhart wasted no time. He pressed Adams' body right into his own body, absorbing him. Instantly, the agent could feel his flesh disassembling, molecule by molecule, to meld the two of them into one being. Adams' horrific shrieks echoed in Reinhart's head at the merging of their minds. The agent's thoughts and memories became Adams'. And Adams', his.

In flashes of these new memories, Reinhart recalled how he -or rather, how John Adams -had become a being of omnipotence: It was August 2nd, 1946; he was living in Pena Blanca Spring, Texas. He and a couple of the other ranch hands were cooling off in a pond when a meteor suddenly crashed into it. His companions dashed into the surrounding woods. Not him, though. Reinhart could sense that Adams wasn't too bright back then. When the mud had settled he dove under to get a look at the fallen rock.

The water must've cooled the meteorite too fast. Right before his startled eyes it cracked open like an oyster. Yes, an oyster. Because nestled inside of it was a black globe, a universal pearl the size of a softball. The most non-reflective type of obsidian, it looked like a hole leading into a dimension of nothingness at the bottom of the pond.

Having snatched up the globe, Adams examined it while standing on the edge of the water. Rotating it in his hand, without warning it adhered to his wet skin as though it had been dipped in epoxy. Scared, he tried ripping it off, but to no avail. Feeling a pinprick, he watched in horror as a needle extended from the sphere and into the flesh beneath his thumb. It drained all of its blackness into him, until the globe turned clear as water.

Curious places and events raced through his head -and Reinhart's. He witnessed a myriad of planets, suns and stars quickly forming. Then just as quickly they went supernova, only to reconstruct into different states of existence: nebulae, other planetary systems, black holes...

His mind's eye zoomed onto some of the planet surfaces that contained life, to where his attention was forced in the direction of lions and tigers -and other un-named ferocious beasts - as they hunted down and devoured their prey.

Though not in words, these violent occurrences revealed to Reinhart -as it did Adams -a shocking, soul-shattering truth: Whether it be an exploding sun as it takes out its orbiting planets, or the brutal killing by a pack of predators, there is no presence of

guilt or remorse in the natural order. There is no promise of stability weaved into the fabric of any person, celestial place or thing. And what humans consider "death" is merely the exchanging of one state of existence for another, neither one lesser or greater, better or worse. The laws of the universe judge neither murderous man nor heavenly holocaust as evil or a monstrosity. These catalysts of change are the tools of the great macrocosm, necessary instruments to prevent stagnancy.

Honor, love, right and wrong: none of these human values plays any type of role in the make-up of the cosmos. And, since these concepts exist only in the minds of men...they don't exist at all. This is what the globe revealed.

But it also gave Adams so much more: equations as long as a light year, formulas; it opened to him the unrestricted catalogue of every known (and every unknown) element in the universe. It showed him how to mix them in his mind, mix them with the mental ease of a geneticist stirring a pan of alphabet soup. More to the dreadful point, it showed him how to unleash the powers of the universe on the slightest of whims.

When the joining was done, Reinhart opened his eyes and marveled at how completely healed he was, his black fingernails the only telltale sign that he had vanquished Adams.

Looking out over a tortured land of crushed stone and mangled metal, with the flames from broken gas mains firing up the night, he observed the survivors as they crawled out from hiding. Though bloodied, with many severely wounded, they began to cheer and applaud him.

As these humans raised him to the stature of world savior, and as he raised his arms to the heavens, he found that he was no longer Richard Reinhart of the CIA. Nor was he John Adams. Before showering the land with lightning bolts as numerous as raindrops, he felt compelled to inform the world, "My...name...is...Chaos!"

January 1, 2025

Terrorists had attempted to destroy U.S. landmarks in 2021. They failed. But the bombed out section of the Grand Canyon had become a research paradise for Melissa Bismarck. Even though the temperature was just above freezing, the twenty-nine-year-old

archeologist wiped heavy sweat from her brow. Crouched down, she tried forcing the point of her hand-held pick into the unearthed meteorite -it just wouldn't split.

The golden-haired scientist had first assumed it to be an offshoot of the Canyon Diablo Meteorite. The one responsible for Arizona's Meteor Crater. After having given it a cursory once over, and after taking off her jacket and rolling up her sleeves, she no longer cared where in the heavens it came from. The mass of iron ore, about the size of a microwave oven, had an inexplicable, though very unmistakable, seam running right through the center of it. This anomaly had been driving the usually 'by the book' researcher crazy all morning.

Utterly frustrated, in a gasp of surrender, Melissa let the pick drop from her hand. It issued an off-tone metallic clink when it hit the meteorite in just the right spot. When the two halves fell away from each other, Melissa found herself suddenly enveloped by a brilliance equal to that of all the stars in the universe. And yet, it didn't hurt her eyes as she reached out to touch the source of the light: a glowing sphere about the size of a softball.

Scott Dell'Anciprete



MY FAVORITE MOUNTAIN *by Rob Carlson*

It's not about the girl,
The one that clawed my heart,
It's not about any external encounter
The kind to be expected

It's about the fall from the mountain
The one that I've learned to climb
Meeting her then, a cool easy breeze
That penetrated my skull to find my hurricane winds

Unleashed and then falling,
A match tossed on gasoline
Then crashes phoenix to the dirt
Lying still splayed out on the ground

I see the devil laugh
Whispers breach then strong
Urging me to run / rebuild and fortify walls
To hide in a castle with alchemy

But practiced now resistance
I retie my shoes for Godspeed,
And start along the path again
Hands in pockets / smiling

Watching, enjoying, singing
It's about the beauty of the climb



Laura Morin





Derek Amengual

Exquisite pain of desire,
surrender myself
lost, within the feel of him.
Shivers of delight dance
along the wake
of his fingers,
trailed delicately
across my skin.
The sweet salt of
his skin, mingled
with the salt of mine,
caresses the tip of my tongue.
I gaze adoringly,
he, and idol, poised
upon a gilded pedestal.
I am only his.

by Jillian Harlow

RETURNING THOUGHTS

by Joshua Therrien

Eliese Rankle



From summertime,
To counting sheep,
To clothing stores,
I think of you.

From my crumby job,
To school vacation,
To the color red,
I think of you.

From pocket change,
To chewing gum,
To movie theaters,
I think of you.

From election day,
To the city bus stop,
To ice cream,
I think of you.



CELESTIAL ADVICE

by Anders Warringer

Draped over me was the lingering notion-
An ocean, riddled with foam
That flows by the whistling wind
Sways with me now.

Unified with the earth
As it carefully dances its course,
Ripped roar by raw emotion,
Spun round by the hands
Of an undying will.

A Cloaked Sage of old age
Whispers through his whirling aura,
That radiates an auburn hue,
And his words float down
Through parted skies
Rambling along patterns - flickering
On the curtains of nightshade,
Ride along and fall upon
A campsite littered with night stars.
My own luminous blanket
Riddled with a fluctuating glow.

Your celestial advice
Has rained through
Plunging into me.
Chiming bells in my ears,
And my own
Cloudy soul
Knows nothing
But hears
The night sky.



Ben Fowler

3 quarters yellow,
and a quarter green,
such odd colors to stain these walls.
It's 9:24 and the place is full,
In a small café where I sit and think.
On a small couch
Pushed to the far left
4 sit so happy
A memory of Duke Ellington
Lies directly behind them.
They smile and laugh
About jokes they don't even find humorous.
A defense mechanism
To hide the tears.

A female sits in the corner alone
Lost in her music and her work.
She slowly nibbles some food
And sips on her orange juice.
Looking so sad and alone
She sits at a two person table
Waiting for a guest who will never come.

Towards the center of this all
Sits a familiar face
Sipping her coffee
and giving her worldly views
on things she could care less about
but it's nice to hear someone listening to you.

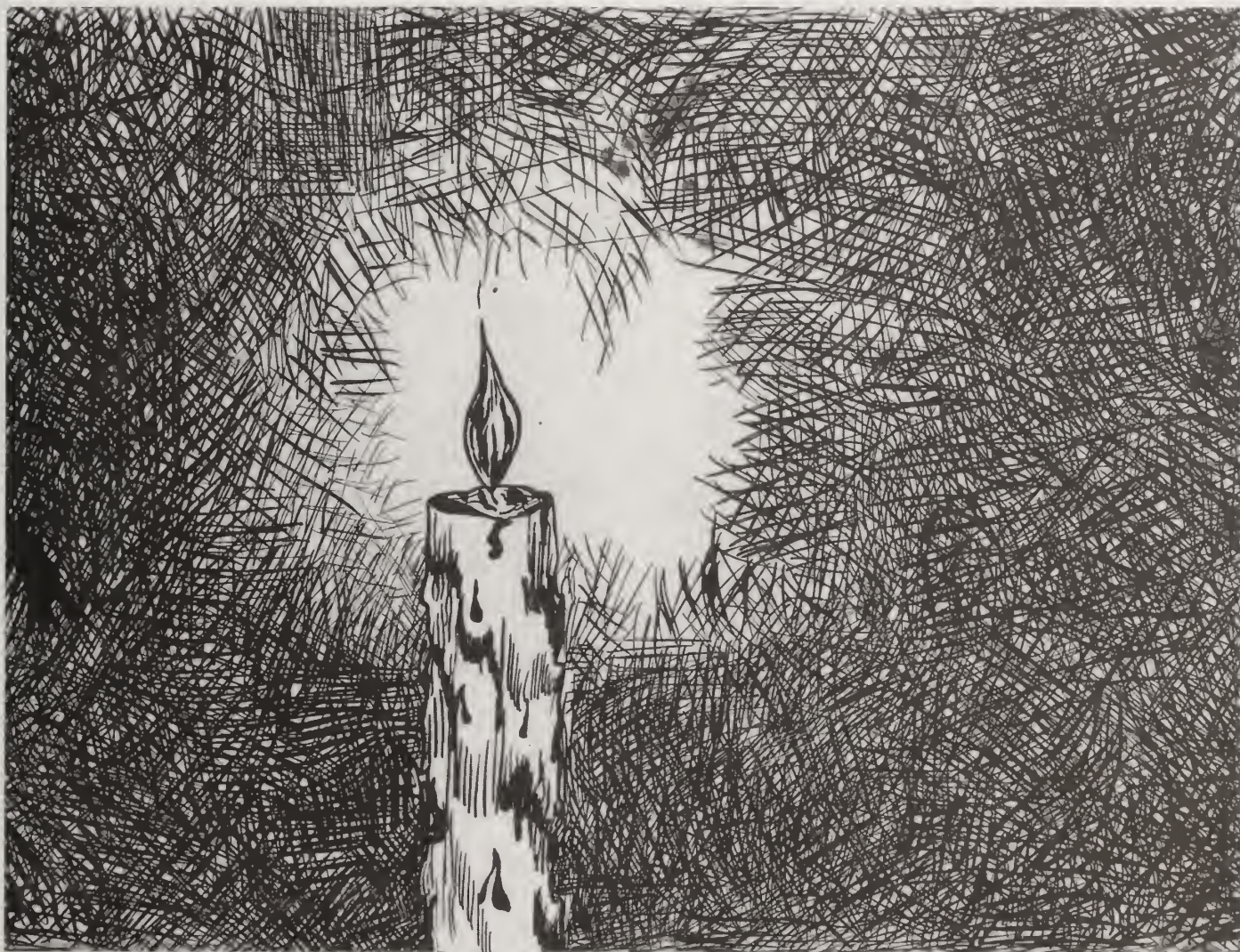
And a pathetic couple
Sits to the right
Squeezing each other tight
Cutting off the circulation
So neither will realize
There's no such thing as love.

The greenish blue carpet
Which floods this ground
Supposed to cover the floor,
Cover the ugliness
The stuff they don't
want anyone to see
is poorly trying to hide
all this dirt that I can see.

PEEKING BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

by Matt White

Hope - *Malek Khoury*



it's a cold sad bottom
like no socks on a concrete floor
and it's after midnight
and i'm staring at you
bathed in alarm clock light
your mind, cold, slips off
like a thief in the sheets
and you wake up staring at your feet
and for a minute you don't know where you are
until you roll over
nose to wall like any other wall
and realize it's all the same.

Laura Hollis

by Jess Lane



NO --- JUSTICE

by Joshua Therrien

I beat back the wolves of poverty
All through the shadow ridden night.
The day brings with it a brief sanctuary,
But then the wolves return with the shadows.
I cannot win.

I stop the skeletons of despair
From clinging to the healthy hopes
Of scraggly, strangling souls
Only to give a fragile peace.
There is no reward.

I defend myself from the apparitions of hatred
All through my sunlit travels.
The day covers my eyes and I end up
Back at the beginning of my infinite struggle with the ghosts.
I cannot win.

I grapple with the fiends of death
For the sake of helpless creatures.
They scurry away, only to be
Claimed by the cold hands at a later time.
There is no reward.

How can I fight that
Which cannot be beaten?
What choice do I have
But to give in or lose trying?



Ben Fowler

I am from teacups,
from Parliments and Windex.
I am from the yellow linoleum flooring,
(sticky, edged in black).
I am from two-family houses with
twin porches.
Where everyone sits Sunday dinner at one.

WHERE I'M FROM

by Lynne Faureau

I'm from Cameo cookies and long, painted nails,
from Ponds and Taboo.
I'm from never marry, never have children,
and always wear a slip.
I am from a repressed, depressed Lucille Ball-ish
redhead at heart-and the Earles of Larchmont.
I am from the distant son of an alcoholic ghost,
From machine oil, Aqua Velva,
and unpredictable rage.
Under my bed was a record case,
45's neatly stacked.
Songs of sandmen, and moons on fire,
baby faces, and getting older and deeper in debt.
I am those songs we sung,
my sisters and I,
Mimicking the lyrics, the dance, the family.

Steve Wispilkin





Svetlana

Ryan Timony

"My jeans?
Express size 5/6 regular jeans?
First date covered with soda jeans?
My last day of high school jeans?
My look great with everything jeans?
Loungin' in my room doing homework jeans?

Darkblasted denim designed deliberately to
provide the classic precision fit for *me*,
you want to borrow *those* jeans?" I replied.

Like I'd hand over the opportunity to spoil those perfectly worn
seams, which were
sewn
splendidly together with
strands of carefully
selected thread;
she knew better.

On Friday, my
foolish sister
snuck in and
"found" my jeans.

by Meaghan Kountze

But to her dismay,
these jeans could not be swayed.
These jeans are mine!
They'd not....

wrap around her waist or
hold her hips or
elegantly trim her thighs or
loosely circle around her calves;

These jeans are mine!
There'd be no....
formulation to fit her figure, and no
stretching or shrinking to suit her shape.
They crave only my curves.

"My jeans?" I laughed.
"You could never model my jeans."



Andrew Sprague

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